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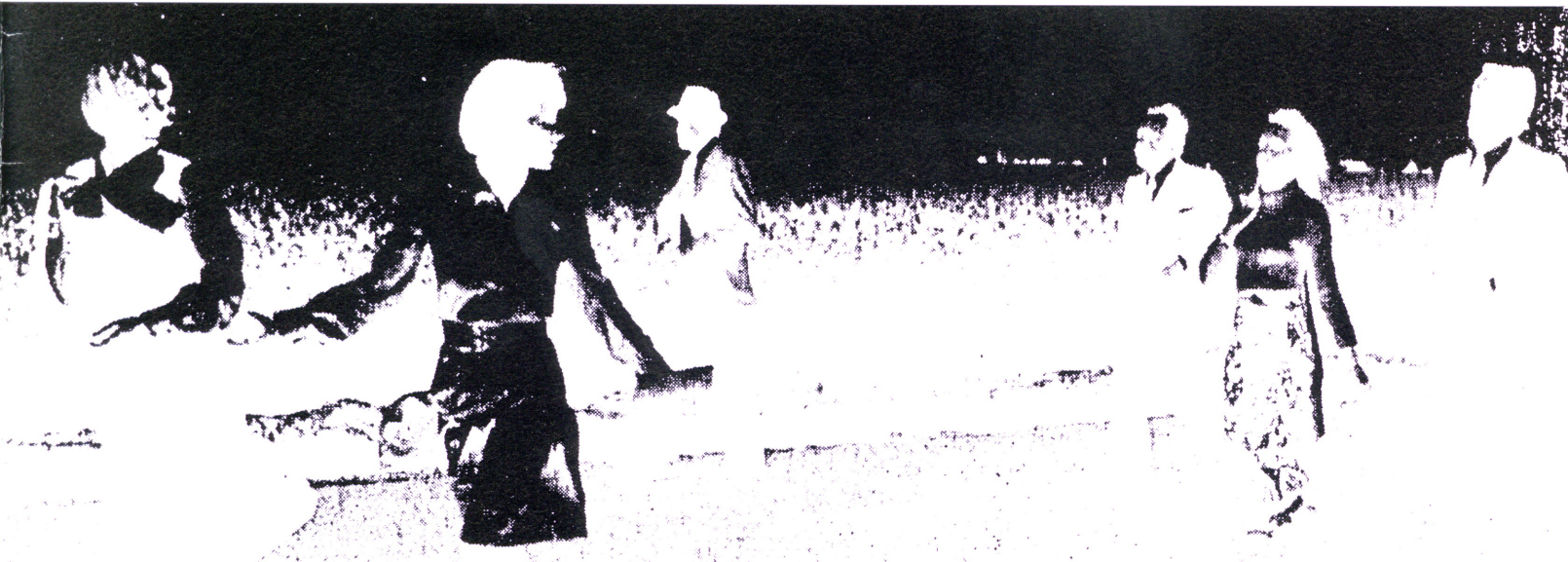
This has been a great year for the Circle, and I would like to thank everyone who has made that possible. We hope that we have brought the magazine more attention during our time with the Circle, and I hope that everyone will stick with us for more great things to come.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Wilson
Editor, Auburn Circle

The Auburn Circle welcomes work from students, staff, alumni and supporters of the publication. Prose, poetry, essays, and articles should be typed, if possible. All art work should be submitted as a finished photograph, color or black and white. Slides will be accepted. Submissions will be returned on request.

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Mandy Hudson

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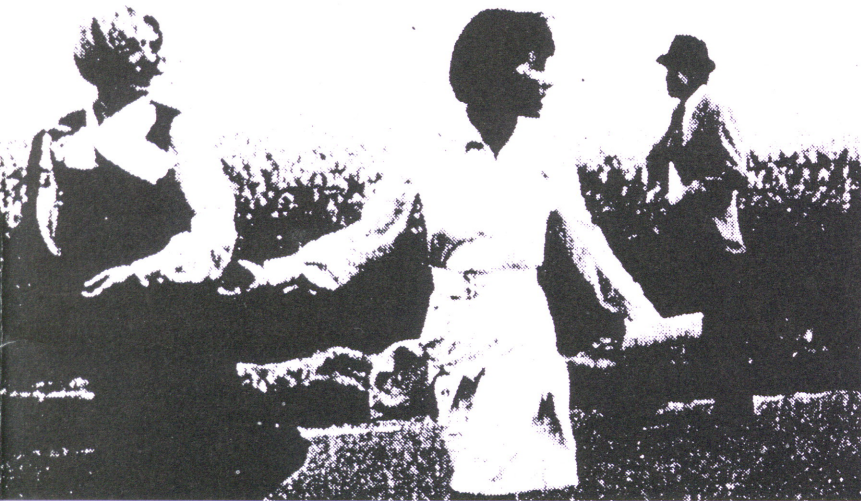
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PAPER, PLASTIC AND A SHOOTING STAR

Mandy Hudson

The swarm of customers surged in and out between the sliding glass doors, which slid open and closed at such a rate as if to chop in half any unlucky straggler paused in the doorway. Plastic rustled, and the crunch of paper sacks being snapped open fell into sync with the beeps of the scanners and confident punch of cash register keys: all adding to the commotion of a late Wednesday afternoon. It was senior citizen day -- the day when the elderly came crawling out of the woodwork to storm the medium-sized supermarket. While the cashiers remained fixed at a designated register, working fast as their fingers could swipe the items, the baggers scurried around at the mercy of the big-shots in customer service. The lucky ones could stay at register and sack groceries while the unlucky were made to run back and forth to the back of the store to fetch more sacks, mop up a gallon of spilled milk in the doorway, or push in more carts from the parking lot (during a busy day, this meant managing to bring in six or seven during the time that twelve went out the door.) I was new to this crazy scene and watched.

Yes, I was thankful to be standing there at the end of isle four, putting milk and meat in plastic, bread, eggs and chips in paper, explaining to people who could hardly hear which side of a debit card was up; but at the same time my motivation and enthusiasm for all of the above was quickly waning. Being the only college employee scheduled for *only* 20 hours a week (the rest had 25-40) my co-workers had come to ask why I worked so little. Most all of them were putting themselves through school and had bills to pay -- reason enough for them to endure the hectic pace. They didn't understand why someone who had the rent split between four roommates in a trailer would choose to be here -- and believe me, I was beginning to wonder, myself. Twenty hours a week? Why, to them I was practically loafing! On one hand, I had never been obsessed with clothes, was satisfied with my car, and rarely bought CDs. I didn't require any high-maintenance living expenses, and the tiny check my parents sent every two weeks was just enough to get by.

I reminded myself that the reason I was standing at the end of the isle sacking groceries was for the simple hope that in a year or two *I wouldn't be*. I loved every minute of my Auburn education, but sometimes the door of opportunity has a dollar sign on it. If I was going to seize the prime of my youth (as I intended),

I knew, realistically, some planning was involved. The possibilities in my imagination were endless -- a semester of school in England, six weeks in Yellowstone National Park, a summer internship in Washington D.C. ...Doors that were closed would open, but I might have to work a little to get the handle started.

Nevertheless, standing there watching the endless stream of groceries roll down the conveyer belt my way, somehow I found it hard to picture myself one day walking the streets of London. I had found that as much as I might wonder about the customers (Why is the guy with the massive tattoo buying baby food? What does the bald man need with this box of hair color, etc....?), overall, people couldn't care less who was bagging their groceries. So as a new line of cans and apples came pouring my way, I hardly blinked when a pile of cloth bags were dumped in front of my hands. Lots of the customers were eco-savvy nowadays, and I mindlessly began putting the groceries in the fabric bags. Without looking up, I was about to mumble the standard "Hi, how are you doing? Did you find everything okay tonight?" but before I could open my mouth a female voice said *to me*,

"And is Mandy doing fine this evening?"

I did the double take I always do before I realize I'm wearing a name tag and glanced up at the woman. In front of me stood a middle-aged woman of stout proportions with long brown hair held back by a clasp. She was wearing a long, flowing dress and had a large tote bag with her. "Umm, fine, I guess..." I answered.

"That's good," she said. "So where are we from?" I proceeded to tell her about my hometown of Florence, and upon further questioning what year I was at Auburn, and where I was living, etc.

"I do love a pretty day. Sun's gone down, but it's still warm as afternoon," she chattered, and I was amazed at her energy. I had to pause when her TIME magazine came through the line, scanning the headlines quickly as I dropped it in a bag.

"Hmm..." she mused, surveying me carefully. "Journalism or political science?"

I glanced up.

"Journalism," I said, surprised. "In fact, possibly both."

She smiled. "I could tell by the way you held that magazine. You looked like you really wanted to stop and read it."

I had to laugh.

"That obvious, huh?"

Her groceries were into bags surprisingly fast, and she asked if I would accompany her to her car. We continued our discussion on the way out and by the time we reached her car she knew all about my background, things I liked, and what I didn't. When the buggy was almost completely empty she turned to me and asked, "Tell me, Mandy, what is your highest hope?"

I paused. My highest hope? What a question!

"To write a book," I answered, finally putting the last sack into her car.

She smiled and slammed the trunk. "And write a book you shall." She dug out her keys from the bottom of her purse. Then she gave me a dollar.

"Remember, just as one dollar leads to a thousand, one dream leads to an accomplishment."

"Thanks a lot," I said.

"No, thank *you*." She made some sort of symbol over my head with her hand.

"God bless you, in Jesus' name," she added.

She jumped in her car before I could say anything else. Not sure what to do, I moved out of the way and watched her slowly back out of the space. Suddenly, the car stopped. The driver's side window came rolling down and her head appeared in the opening.



Chuck Duck
"Untitled"



Matt Mullins
"Abstract Color"



Kathryn Henry
"Coffee Time"



Teri Smith
"Untitled"

"Did you see that?" she asked, leaning out of the car and pointing up at the sky

I tried to follow her finger with my eyes.

"No, what?" I asked.

"Come closer, and look right up through there."

I stared, still unaware of what I was supposed to be seeing. A minute later, and still nothing. "Oh, well," she said. "Keep looking, you might see it."

She had the window rolled up and the car moving again, before I could ask what. I was left, standing beside the empty space, staring up at the sky. I felt the dollar in my hand and put it into my pocket.

Back inside the store, the crowd was beginning to die down. One of the other baggers who had come outside to push carts heard our last comments and remarked, "You got a weird one that time, didn't you?" I only shrugged, and went back to bagging. Later that night when all the commotion had died down and all the reasonable people were done with their grocery shopping and sound asleep in bed, I went on a break, a sharp hunger gnawing at the sides of my stomach. I remembered my dollar, and it was just enough to buy me a package of Fig Newtons and a 25 cent "Big K" Cola. I wandered out into the parking lot, illuminated only by the pale, sickly glow of the streetlights.

I went around to the back parking lot, deserted except for the employees' cars. I had left the keys to my own car inside and didn't feel like going back in to get them, so spying one of my co-workers' truck, I hopped into the back and popped the top on the can. It was a nice night, and I had sat there for a long time, chewing thoughtfully in the silence.

Remembering the lady I had talked with earlier, I looked up into the sky. I thought about the woman, and her dollar, and the last words she said to me. What had she seen?

"Lady, you are nuts," I muttered, and sat fifteen more minutes in the dead silence. And then, to my surprise, I actually saw something. A tiny flash of light streaked to my left! Then I heard a car door slam. It was one of my co-workers, just off work, at his car a few spaces down.

"Are you watching it too?" he called, throwing his things into the passenger's side.

"What?" I answered.

He motioned towards the sky.

"The meteor shower. I'm going to watch it from Keisel Park. Are you watching it?"

"Uh, yeah. I saw one," I said, standing up.

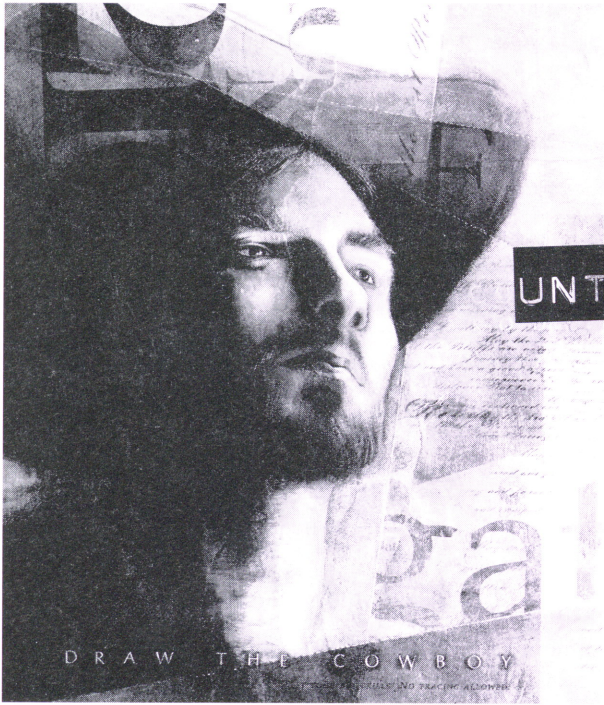
"You shouldn't be out here by yourself this late at night, you know," he said, before getting into the car.

"I know," I called back, "I'm going inside."

After he had gone, I began walking back to the building, knowing slippery celery and rattling boxes of dry pasta awaited me. Strangely enough, I started thinking about the headlines on the TIME magazine I had seen earlier. Pausing near the cracked concrete entrance I wondered about the gas station attendant who sketches skyscrapers behind the counter at 2 am, the pizza deliverer who listens to Shakespeare on tape in their car on long deliveries, the janitor belting out solos to the radio in the deserted office building -- pretending he's on Broadway, and the waitress who puts all her tips in a jar for a road trip to the west coast, and all the other undercover dreamers, however scattered, who used what they had as a stepping stone to what they didn't. Sometimes one must be patient, and just because the target is lost from sight for awhile, that doesn't mean its gone away.

I waited for a few more minutes -- hoping to see another shooting star -- but none came by. Yet, I did see something more extraordinary. I found that if I looked hard enough, I could see the stars just as clearly from the dark and deserted parking lots as I could from my backyard at home. Gazing above the streetlight's orange haze, I began to pick out the tiny pin pricks of stars, glowing brighter the longer I looked. I closed my eyes and I could still see them, glowing fiercely against the blackness.

I went back inside, their imprints still blazing stolidly inside my mind.



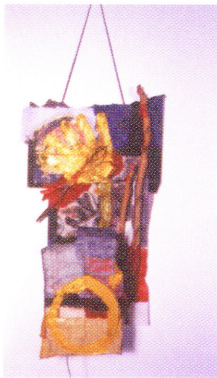
UNTITLED

Amanda Murray

I like the man you are becoming
 I like the ambition you are showing
 I like the concern that continues growing
 I like the uniqueness that you have begun valuing
 I like the laughter you are always giving
 I like the pride in yourself that you are taking
 I like the responsibility that you are facing
 I like the man you are becoming

Elise Woodward
 "Cowboy"

Amanda Murray is a junior majoring in public relations. She wrote this poem for her brother when he graduated from high school.



Jamie Blalock
 "Yellow face: gay"
 "Yellow face: lotto"
 "Yellow face: religion"

Mandy Hudson is a junior majoring in journalism with a political science minor.

UNTITLED

Kathy Stewart



Brooke King
"Untitled"

The hunger you see in my
eyes is sated by your touch.
Your fingers lightly trace aging
lines along my face,
And vivid dreams an memories do
not amount to much.

Yet silent yearnings of my heart heed nei-
ther time nor space,
My trembling soul cries in the dark for mercy
and respite,
And you hold me without judgement, strong arms of
tender grace.

You speak no words to move me from this darkest hour
of night,
Your heart beats on and on, your breath sprays softly on my
cheek.
I can't abide in darkness, yet I cannot see the light,

So you wrap your strength around me the moment I am weak,
Bearing faith, sustaining energy, and prayers now for two,
You unspoken meditation for the solace that I seek.

You lift your head and look at me; your eyes are glistening blue.
Stained-glass tears of understanding for a pain you did not know
When we walked our separate lives, when we lived as me and you.

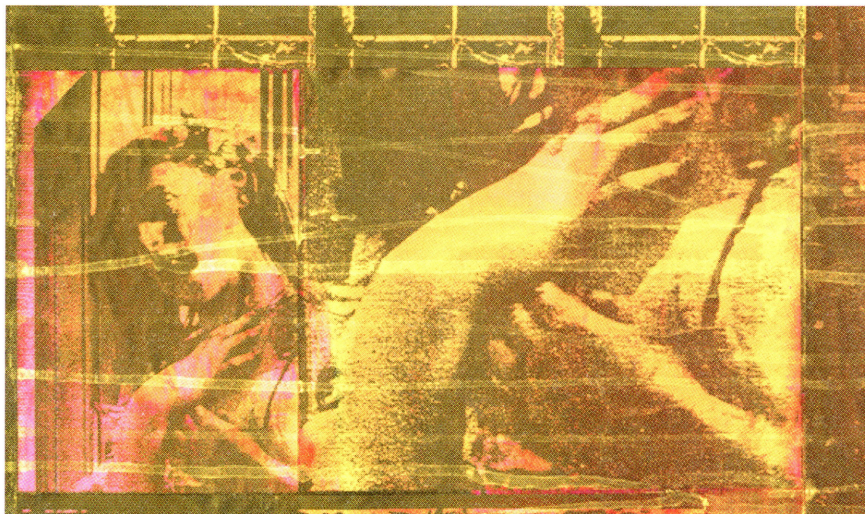
I taste your salty kiss; you lay your head upon my brow.
Your truth falls softly on my face when you close your weary eyes,
Yesterday is gone for good, but you and I are now.

So sleep the sleep of angels while beside you I will lie,
My fingers lightly tracing aging lines upon your face.
I promise, my forever friend, my love will never die.

Dan Greer
"Untitled"



Jason Nielson
"My Heart Bleeds for you"



I stare at young wallpaper, already brittle
 curling away from the shower head.
 Air lifts vapor, rolling it
 from the surface of the bath, the surface of my skin,
 up. A hazy face against the window
 collecting, to drip back down cold.

LEAVING DIRTY WATER

Eleanor Inge

Fast-lost-heat- I am bored.
 Stale bubbles, like my generation,
 gather around corners of the tub
 like youth drawn together in humid
 bars, stagnant and complacent.
 Drawn together to complain
 of the car-stereo volume ordinance,
 parental insistence on higher education,
 if I could just get drunk.
 The need to stimulate senses
 damaged by, unlimited internet access,
 snorting my brother's Ritalin, ESPN Sports Center,
 disposable clothes (water down the drain).
 Left with amplified, over-cooked, scalded,
 hyper-civilized, water-logged minds,
 in search of a bath that stays hot.

I, unhappy and rich,
 want HARD pressure
 and HOT water
 and I lay in the tub, drain open to balance the water
 gushing, running over and over my foot,
 down my shin, around then lapping against my stomach.
 Standing water can not stay heated. I cool,
 stand, switch to shower. Leaning with both hands
 against the wall, head down.
 I breathe-----
 Water pounds an unnatural part into my hair,
 then drips a sheet down my back. I don't feel
 heat anymore. I lay back down, worn out, silent.

When I'm tired enough, silent, I think.
 I think even as chill bumps rise.
 I stay in discomfort, thinking.
 Outside my window, dusk to dark.
 The moon rises. I see him
 brightly consuming street lamps below.
 swelling, my mind thinks about the moon.
 So I stand up separating myself
 from dirty water. Blood rushes
 to my brain. Cheeks throb. Neutral, milky water runs
 down my back into itself at the base of my calves,
 and under olive-gray skin rises pink.
 My movements lead me away from thoughts
 of gray computer screens, uninhibited exposed
 sex, remote controls, all-you-can-eat.
 I look down at stagnant, complaining,
 swollen glands of white blood cells and self-help books
 up into the fullness, the newness of that simple moon.



Melanie Foreman
 "Butter"



Rusty White
 "Acid Rain"

This short story is a work of non-fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are neither the product of the author's imagination nor used fictitiously. All come from an alternate universe inside the author's head. The author acts only as a scribe for the voices of the citizens of the alternate universe, who talk to him and force him to write so their lives may be heard in the author's universe. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is not coincidental, for this alternate universe is an exact replica of ours.

(Author's note: I would like to apologize, in advance, for anything these people say or do ... now I shall comb my mind to see who the lucky winners are... looks like Graham and Justine from Salt Lake City! Come on down!)

I.

Graham entered his home, only to find his wife lying on the sofa in the living room and watching a movie on the television again. She was too tall for the sofa. Her legs were dangling off one end and her head was propped up against a pillow she had recently mail ordered from London. It was a hideous thing to see, the pillow.

"That thing is hideous," Graham said. "Where did you get it?"

"Oh where did I get what?" she replied, tediously. She was a very bored woman. Very bored indeed.

"That sofa, that's what," Graham said, pointing to the cushioning apparatus she was lying upon.

"I mail ordered it from London," she replied.

"London?"



Daniel Winters
"Untitled"

END . OF . A . CENTURY

S.M. Parrott

"Yes. London." Their conversations ended up going

in this direction quite frequently.

ECHO, ECHo, ECho, Echo, echo... My uncle was like that. I would ask him a question and he would suddenly become the human equivalent of a cavern. "Uncle Holden, what was the war like?" I would ask. "What was the war like?" he would reply. "Yes, Uncle Holden, I want to know what the war was like." "You want to know what the war was like," he would reply. My mother said that the war made him hard of hearing.

"Well, it's hideous. Send it back," Graham said.

"I find it quite attractive," she said. "That's why I lay on it, and not you." She turned her gaze away from the television and towards Graham. Graham cringed. My wife rarely lies on me. She says I'm too small, whatever that means.

"Please stop," Graham said. "You don't have to be like that. I was just making a point."

"Well your point was not well taken."

"Oh, my point was not well taken," Graham replied. He used his fingers as quotation marks to place emphasis upon the "not well taken," before continuing with his rant. "Well it should be; that sofa is hideous and personally I had just better not see that on the credit card bill is all. Believe me, dearest, you've pushed me too far in the past and I won't continue to be your..."

"Oh, do be a darling and move, Graham," she said. She interrupted him. He became irate. My wife interrupts me a lot. She says it's because I talk too much and get off the point when I tell stories. Go figure. Graham's wife wriggled in her seat, trying to see the television but was soon hindered when Graham leaned to his left and blocked her field of view of the television. She made another effort to see the television, but, finding Graham unyielding, she gave it up. "Do be a darling," she repeated.

My uncle hated words like "darling." He always told me that the only people who used these words were "phonies." I put up my fingers in the form of quotation marks when I say phonies.

"No, I will not be a darling," Graham said. "First you tell me how much you paid for that hideous thing. Also, I was hoping you could possibly be a dear and explain to me how you could possibly find that wretched thing attractive? Look at it!" Graham held up his fingers in the shape of quotation marks when he said "be a dear," to emphasize his mocking tone for his wife. He did that quite often. Some people, such as myself, find it annoying. My uncle used to do the same thing, until he was shot in the war. After that, he stopped. I suppose the Germans didn't find the derisive fingerings too ideal of a trait in a human being, either.



Brook Hagler

"Did you see the shoes that lady was wearing?"

Graham's wife glared at him. "I find it quite attractive. Why don't you?" Graham glared back at his wife. "First of all," he said, "its fabric is hideous!" Graham's wife huffed and puffed and rolled over on the sofa to where she was no longer facing him. "Oh, you've already told me that, darling. Do come off it," she said. "Well, it is hideous! Should I even bother to mention the green lines going all up and down, and the red ones going across the damn thing?" I twinge every time I hear one of the citizens of the universe inside my head curse. I, personally, am a devout Christian and become greatly disturbed when the voices in my head curse. So, when Graham told me to write this, I broke into a horrid series of spasms. "Well," his wife said, "it was made in London by a master designer who used only the greatest of fabrics, one of which came from the hide of a now extinct form of cat from India." "Where the hell did you hear that, the catalog?" he asked. As I typed that, I broke into another series of spasms. "Actually, yes," his wife replied bitterly. At this point, I must warn you, the reader, of the upcoming rant from my friend Graham. And to protect my readers from the poisoning of your virgin eyes, I will provide only the edited version of my friend's reply. "Well you can \$&#%*\$ (spasms) return it and among the packing you can enclose my own little !@\$%^& (spasms) description," he said. "I say that it doesn't matter where the *&^%\$ (spasms) it was made, because it's hideous. I also couldn't give a good &*\$%#@ (spasms) if it is a rare form of Polynesian fabric made from the &*\$%# (spasms) of speckled antelope or some nonsense. How exactly do you expect me to even sit on that, with all its ruffles? And turn around when I talk to you, &*\$%#@!*& (spasms)."

Graham's wife rolled back over to where she was facing him. "Well, I find it quite attractive," she said.

"That's why I lay on it and not you."

"You've already said that," he replied, "do come off it." Again,

Graham added the quotation marks to place emphasis upon the fact that ha said "do come off it." Pure genius. I swear to God. But hey, I just type what they tell me.

His wife looked away from Graham and back at the television. She was no longer interested in the conversation.

"Be a dear and move away from the television," she said.

Graham turned from where he was standing and saw that his wife was watching a pornographic movie.

"Must you watch that filth, dear," he asked her. "Your mind is getting dirty."

She picked up the pillow special ordered from London and tossed it at him. He backed up and watched as the pillow hit the television. My Uncle Holden once pulled a knife on my father when my father asked him to quit watching dirty films in front of my sisters and I. That was shortly before we returned him to the nut house.

"Darling, you're getting close to thirty years of age," Graham said. "You've outgrown this rubbish."

Graham's wife shifted her gaze from the television to the maroon shag carpet.

"There's ants in the carpet," she said. (If any of my readers are considering writing me a letter asking what Graham's wife meant by this, please don't. I just write what the voices in my head tell me to write.)

"Darling, please. Turn that filth off." Graham leaned over and picked up the remote control to turn the television off. His wife was faster, and grabbed the remote control before he could.

"Please darling," Graham said. "Quit watching this filth and come to bed."

The woman looked down towards the carpet again.

"Listen, you can hear the dirty little monsters eating all the morsels," she said. "They're picking up the rubbish."

Graham looked down at the carpet, leaned over, and picked up the pillow that had bee thrown at him. He walked over to the sofa and gently set the pillow against his wife's thigh. "Goodnight, dear," he said. Graham bent to his knees and, leaning over, kissed his wife on the cheek before turning and walking into the bedroom.

II.

Justine entered the bedroom after finishing her dirty little porn (she let me watch it with her inside my head) to find her husband in bed. She crossed the bedroom and sat down on her side of the bed. Her husband rolled over and let out a fraudulent snore.

Justine knew he wasn't asleep because it always took him hours to fall asleep (he had nightmares about work) and anyway, he didn't even snore when he WAS asleep. Her husband let out another fraudulent snore and mumbled something.

Justine didn't know it, but her husband was dreaming of leprechauns. Pretty female green ones. They danced about him and told him they loved him. But what's strange, he thought, is that he couldn't be dreaming

because he wasn't asleep. So if he wasn't asleep and wasn't dreaming, he thought, where did all these green Irish midgets doing the watoosie come from? And why didn't they talk to HIM? As my uncle would say, while making quotation marks out of his fingers, Justine's husband was "two bricks short of a pile." His "elevator did not run to the top floor." In other words, he was going insane like my uncle did. Justine didn't know any of this, however, so she got up from her seat beside her husband and went to the bathroom.

The light was still on in the bathroom, and her husband's clothes were scattered on the floor. The toilet seat was up, like most guys seem to enjoy it. My wife is always nagging me about that. So I've been thinking about just leaving it down so she'll understand why men like it up.

Justine's husband's jacket hung from the doorknob. I was very plain, she thought. He was very plain, she thought. My uncle used to say that people dress the same so that they feel the same as everybody else. That's what the army did, he said. My uncle used to dress up in his uniform and yell commands at my sisters and I. "Atten Hut!" he'd scream.

Then me and my sisters would be real still and stand up tall. Then he'd scream out a bunch more commands and we'd have the time of our lives. My parents thought it was cute, too, until my uncle gave us live ammunition.

Justine took her husband's jacket off its makeshift rack and placed it in the bathtub so that it blocked the drain. Then she picked the rest of his clothes up off the floor and threw them into the bathtub.

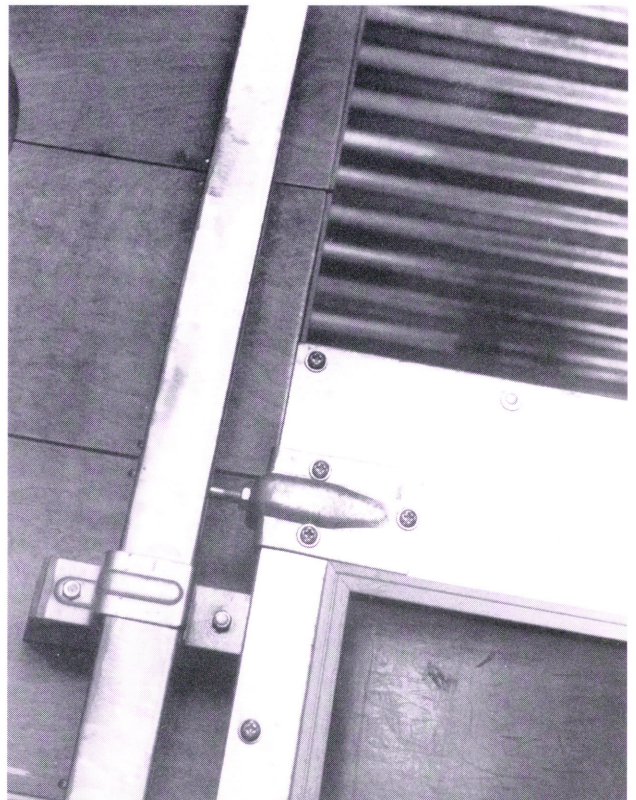
Justine, not understanding why she was doing any of this, then turned on the hot water and it began to flow over the jacket, letting off steam and hazing the mirror. She got back up from beside the tub and walked over to the mirror where she wiped away the haze. Justine then stripped down to her underwear and looked at herself in the mirror. A beautiful, nearly thirty-year-old woman gazed back at her. Her hair was a sweet honey blonde color, her eyes blue as the ocean (her husband had told her this, while they were still dating, after the first time they had made love). Her body was in good enough shape. Her hips were not large, she thought. She did not worry about her behind, and she noticed that she did not have any visible lines. Then she smiled. She had marvelous white teeth. Marvelous teeth, indeed. Then she looked down at her body again. It wasn't that great anymore, but she was still quite attractive for a woman pushing thirty. It was her teeth, that was it. She took great care of her teeth. And the dentist took great care of her. She let out a little giggle and went back into the bedroom.

She lied down beside, and definitely not on top of, her husband and nuzzled in close to him. He rolled over again, away from her. She let out a sigh, but he did nothing. So she let out another sigh.

"Oh, what is it?" her husband said. He acted as though she had awakened him from a deep sleep. But in reality he was just happy to have his attention diverted from the green leprechauns, who were now doing the mashed potato.

"Why did we move here?" Justine asked.

"Look," he said, "I thought we already talked about this."



Gretchen Grissom
"Gunmetal Door"

"I know. But can we talk about it again?"

"Must we?"

"Please," she said.

Her husband rolled over and faced her. They stared into each other's eyes. He noticed that she had eyes as blue as oceans. He had told her that once, but couldn't remember when. "Do you not like it here?" he asked.

"No, I don't," she replied.

"Look," her husband said. "Settling into a brand new town is always hard."

"I know that, but..."

"And these people who are our neighbors are from the same background as us," he said.

"I know that," she said.

"Ok then. Don't worry, honey," he said.

"I won't," she said.

"You promise?"

"Yes," she said. I promise.

Her husband leaned over and kissed Justine with dry lips. "Goodnight," he said. Then he rolled back over and went to sleep, for real this time. He no longer heard the leprechauns. Instead, he had nightmares about work. Justine got up from the bed and returned to the bathroom, where the bathtub was overflowing. She shut the door and splashed her way over to the mirror, where she wiped away the steamy haze. She gazed at herself in the mirror again, but this time did not like what she saw. So she opened the medicine cabinet and took out the bottle of sleeping pills the doctor had prescribed her husband for his bouts with insomnia.

Shortly before my uncle was put in the place for crazies, he would take crayons and scribble curse words all over our house. He said he was sending us all to hell, whatever that meant. My mom told us to ignore him. It was hard to do that. My uncle told me one night that he was an angel kicked out of heaven, and that he would have his revenge upon God. When I told my mom about this, she told me to ignore him. It was hard to do that. This was about a week before he went to the nuthouse.

Justine poured the contents of the bottle on the counter and then looked at herself in the mirror again. She was different, somehow. She didn't remember previously having black eyes or a purple dorsal fin. She didn't remember having scales, either. Her gills were nice, though. Justine thought they made her look young again. Suddenly, Justine realized that she had been standing in a pool of water for the past few minutes. She looked down and noticed she had no feet, but rather a great big flipper. The water felt good, she thought. Justine took the pills off the counter and swallowed all 30 of them. Then she lifted up her right fin and scrawled the words "Chicken of the Sea" in the steam on the mirror.

As my uncle would say, while making quotation marks with his fingers, Justine had "lost her marbles." She "did not have both oars in the water." She "had her martini shaken, as well as stirred." Justine's "elevator definitely did not go all the way up to the top floor." She had "dropped the ball on her own little new year's celebration." It was the end of her own little century.



Michael Durham
"Rock"

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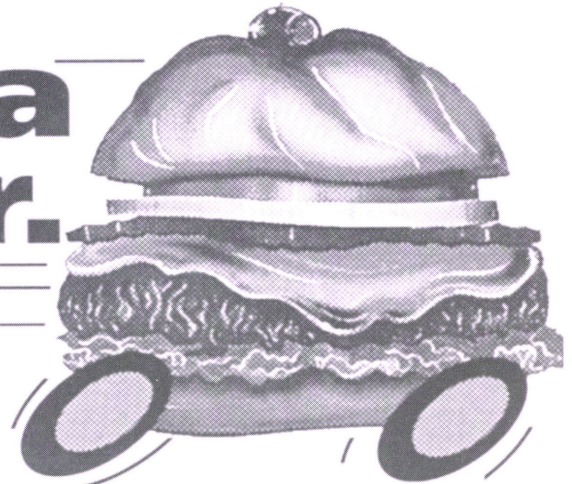
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behind cold rain

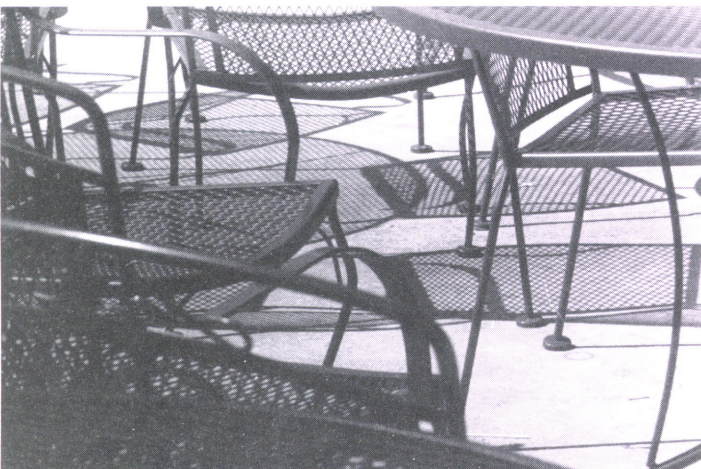
Eleanor Inge

On the wooden frame and glass
 holding you young, rain leaves tracks
 sliding and uneven as the sound of
 that slow violin a street musician plays
 for you. It's nothing like the sound
 of your thin feet in skinny high heels
 down Dauphin St., a steady measure.

Wining strings and cold gangster cars
 sing down the street, melancholy.
 Your pounding heels keep pounding, like rain.
 The violinist plays; pass him now, look beyond
 his smile to luncheons and mystic
 societies that are what he sees in you.

Rain, vulnerable clings and slides down
 this picture like his glance
 towards cracked sidewalks
 when you did not notice him
 smile at you. Junior league meetings,
 and college degrees light a path; a light bright
 in front of your feet makes everything else you
 see dim.

At The Club for lunch
 all those Saturdays we laugh
 about stealing muffins
 mischeivous. Mom rolls her eyes
 laughing. "I can't wait till you have kids.
 Grandmothers have all the fun." I see
 behind the wet tracks of this photograph,
 behind pounding sternness, a green rain
 warm, like your tea parties.
 The violinist in the dim looks even darker.



Alice Lynn McMichael
 "Chairs"

untitled

The hunger you see in my eyes is sated by your touch.
Your fingers lightly trace aging lines along my face,
And vivid dreams and memories do not amount to much.

Yet silent yearnings of my heart heed neither time nor space,
My trembling soul cries in the dark for mercy and respite,
And you hold me without judgement, strong arms of tender grace.

You speak no words to move me from this darkest hour of night,
Your heart beats on and on, your breath sprays softly on my cheek.
I can't abide in darkness, yet I cannot see the light,

So you wrap your strength around me the moment I am weak,
Bearing faith, sustaining energy, and prayers now for two,
You unspoken meditation for the solace that I seek.

You lift your head and look at me; your eyes are glistening blue.
Stained-glass tears of understanding for a pain you did not know
When we walked our separate lives, when we lived as me and you.

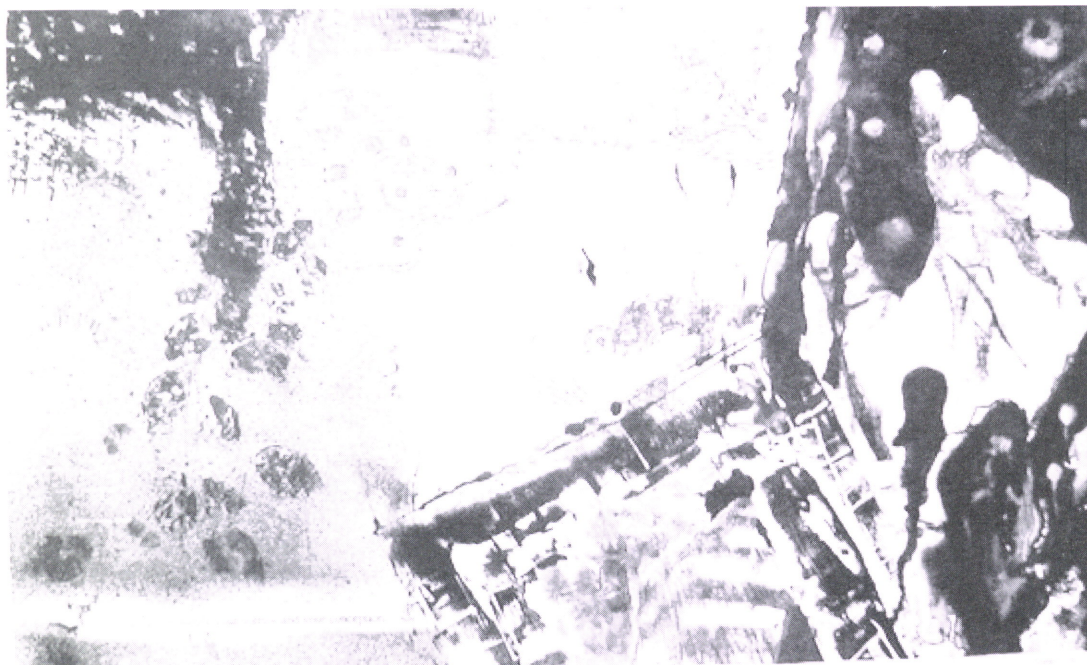
I taste your salty kiss; you lay your head upon my brow.
Your truth falls softly on my face when you close your weary eyes,
Yesterday is gone for good, but you and I are now.

So sleep the sleep of angels while beside you I will lie,
My fingers lightly tracing aging lines upon your face.

I promise, my friend, my love will never die.

Kathy Stewart

Brooke Hagler
"Liza has web feet"



Liza Cobb
"Consequence"

A fold-out sign of neon yellow warns the sparse second floor traffic to avoid the freshly waxed stretch of hall. Beyond the sign, 10 calloused hands work to finish this job between night classes.

A younger man leans against his mop and sighs as a student crosses the barrier, dripping puddles of Hurricane Georges on the forbidden side of the sign. His exasperation is met only with a sly chuckle from an older co-worker who is glad things like that don't bother him anymore.

A tag with the word "Ben" breaks the monotony of his sand-colored polyester uniform, and he's been here before.

"My real name is Benjamin Franklin Hutchinson," the 57-year-old foreman says, standing up straighter. He unfolds his arms, revealing another tag that says "Facilities Division -- Maintenance Engineer" on the other side of the synthetic desert.

I'm the head man in charge of this crew," he says, raising his head proudly under a Naugahyde news-boy hat. The slight gesture of his hand, he's either too weary of too cool to move much, introduces the men at work behind him.

A brilliant smile betrays energy hidden behind his nonchalant slouch as Hutchinson settles in to wait the 15 minutes for the floor to dry.

"This is a pretty good job to have, a pretty good building to work in," he says, cocking his head left an right to get a new angle on the old halls. "But the building itself is pretty boring. It's the people who make it interesting. People make the day pass nicer."

Hutchinson is an Auburn native who, aside from a short southward trek, has lived here all his life. He has spent the last 18 years nurturing the floors of Haley Center. This is two more years that he spent in Miami before he was called back home. This is seven more years that he spent with his beloved wife before she was called home.

"She was standing in the choir loft at church when she was struck down by a brain seizure. It's different when somebody is sick and in the hospital and you have time to get ready. But when somebody just dies ... well, the worst hurt is to have your heart broken," Hutchinson said.

The 4:30 p.m.-12:30 a.m. hours of his job do not bother Hutchinson when she's not there to welcome him home.

"Sometimes I wonder if God took her because of how I loved her. You know, God is a jealous god. If he thinks people love one thing more than they love him, he might just take it away. And oh, how I did love that woman," Hutchinson says as his head shakes in wonder at his heart.

As he turns away, his eyes reflect a sharp pain behind the gold-rimmed glasses that have all but covered his face. Just as quickly as it left, the wide grin returns, inviting as appearance from three gold-covered front teeth. After a couple of quiet minutes, he breaks the silence.

"Yeah, it never gets boring here," he says as the rest of the crew settles into nearby chairs for the 6:15 break.

The crew's chatter turns to a debate over football and the price of the new Burger King meal deal that worker Larry Payne wants for supper. He prods the mop bucket with his weathered steel-toed work boots and wipes the fast food craving from his lips.

PHILOSOPHY . AND . A . NEON . SIGN

LORI . MOORE

Richard "LAZY" Moore, as Larry has dubbed him, intermittently directs traffic.

"Hey man, excuse me," he says to the young guy passing obliviously by the yellow easel. "We just waxed that. Can you walk around?"

Stragglers are one of the biggest annoyances of the job, but they are no real skin off the crew's back. Everyone's legally protected as long as the warning sign stands its ground.

As things start to get quiet, a professor scurries down the hall wearing a professional dress and what looks like a surgical mask. In retreat from the cleanser fumes, she informs Hutchinson that he will not be mopping in the 2400 sector of the building where she is holding class.

"No ma'am, we won't be getting that far tonight," he replied with a controlled nod of his head.

"That's her," he whispers to his crew as his head darts back and forth to the doorway that swallowed her. "She's the one with stuff sealing up her office door and won't let us in. Must have a lot of power to keep us from mopping where she doesn't want us."

Hutchinson grins and whistles in annoyed appreciation. "One thing is that you've got to take a lot here, but you've just got to let it go. You can't get mad," he says pragmatically. "If you've got a match and you scratch it, you get fire. If you don't scratch it, you don't get any fire." That's what his mother says, and she should know. She is 98, and still lives in Auburn.

As he twists a gold and ruby ring around his pinkie finger, Hutchinson says he respects most of the teachers and students who enter the building. After all, he would be out of a job if they weren't here. One of his jobs, anyway.

He proudly owns his own business, Hutchinson Cleaning. He and his two employees clean Boykin Street Elementary School, the Smith Station Fire House and a few other buildings. The grassroots operation is small, but the owner seems to grow six inches taller while talking about it.

"It is not that nice to be in charge," he says, though his chest seems to thrust his gold herringbone cross forward and inch. "It's just nice to have the man-in-charge paycheck."

"What the boss has to remember is that you can't shake your finger at people working for you and make their day bad. If you want people to work, be nice and make them happy," he philosophizes as another satchel-laden collegian is directed away from the waxed floor.

The crew becomes restless as the 6:15 break enters overtime, so Hutchinson makes the call to return to work. The crewmen saunter back to their battle stations and the tedious process resumes.

"There are five steps to mopping a floor," says Payne. "First you have to scrub it with that machine, and then vacuum it. Then you have to dry mop the leftover soap. Next is the real mopping, and finally you have to wax it."

Hutchinson takes control of the official floor scrubber, an awkward and bulky machine only a mother could love. He gently releases the squeegee at the scrubber's back wheel, taking care to tilt it at the right angle when it inevitably gets stuck. Back arched, head tucked and lips swallowed in concentration, Hutchinson guides the stubborn machine evenly down the hall.

"Everybody has their own part of the job. I was in a car accident and have been under doctor's care ever since then so I just do the light stuff ... like moving electric cords, moving chairs, and teasing Lazy 'Ol Richard over there. I just like to keep everything fun," Payne adds, his smile beaming from the heart of a perfectly round visage as his eyes are hard at work observing the machine.

Hutchinson instructs a younger guy named Chris to follow the machine and mop the excess soap. With a drawl that can afford to wait for the floor to dry, Chris replies that he is on his way. As Chris drags a reluctant mop from the bucket and squeezes out the excess water, Larry explains that Chris is wearing denim jeans and a blue velour shirt rather than an official uniform because he is still in training.

The mop flops into a mound on the first hall tile and Hutchinson steps aside as Chris makes his contribution toward a clean building. As the veterans eye the rookie in a watchful silence, Benjamin Franklin Hutchinson has to turn away another pedestrian who has overstepped the neon yellow bounds.

Bay Chapman
"Underbite from Hell"



Kathy Stewart

When Linda Crocilla's house burned to the ground on Oct. 7, 1987, she thought she had suffered the harshest blow life would offer her.

Barefoot, with the clothes on her back, a frying pan, two Corningware dishes and a few items that could fit into a shoebox, Linda watched her home disappear in minutes. Then she began the process of rebuilding her life. It was a process she would become familiar with during the next 12 years as uninvited tragedy banged on her door again and again.

But, like the 10-foot cross that guards her 3-acre farm off a rural Alabama dirt road, Linda bears her suffering in silence and dignity. Tragedy has strengthened her faith, she says. And her faith has been her strength.

"Fire tempers steel," says the 50-year-old former librarian. "When it's done, we're better, stronger, more capable than we ever thought we could be."

After two failed marriages Linda met her present husband, Joe, in 1984. A retired New York City police detective, Joe is 25 years Linda's senior and only a year younger than her father, John.

Linda suffered four miscarriages -- two that were Joe's children -- when they decided they wanted to adopt. The state of Alabama told them that Joe was "too old to adopt," but that Linda could do so as a single parent if she divorced him. "leaving Joe was not an option," Linda says, so

they looked into foreign adoptions.

Most of the foreign adoptions, she says, were either too expensive or a "rip-off." They realized then, Linda says, "that adoption was for the wealthy," and felt their hopes of raising a child would never be achieved.

It was during this time that Linda and Joe's house caught fire. An electrician who came to their house to repair faulty wiring spliced 10 and 12-gauge wires together. Three hours later, their home was engulfed in flames. Had they been able to adopt a child, they now had no place for her.

Linda had seen a picture of a three-room Currier & Ives cabin and took it to a friend to use as a model for her new home. He drew blueprints, constructed the frame and the roof, and Joe and Linda built the rest while living in a motor home in their front yard.

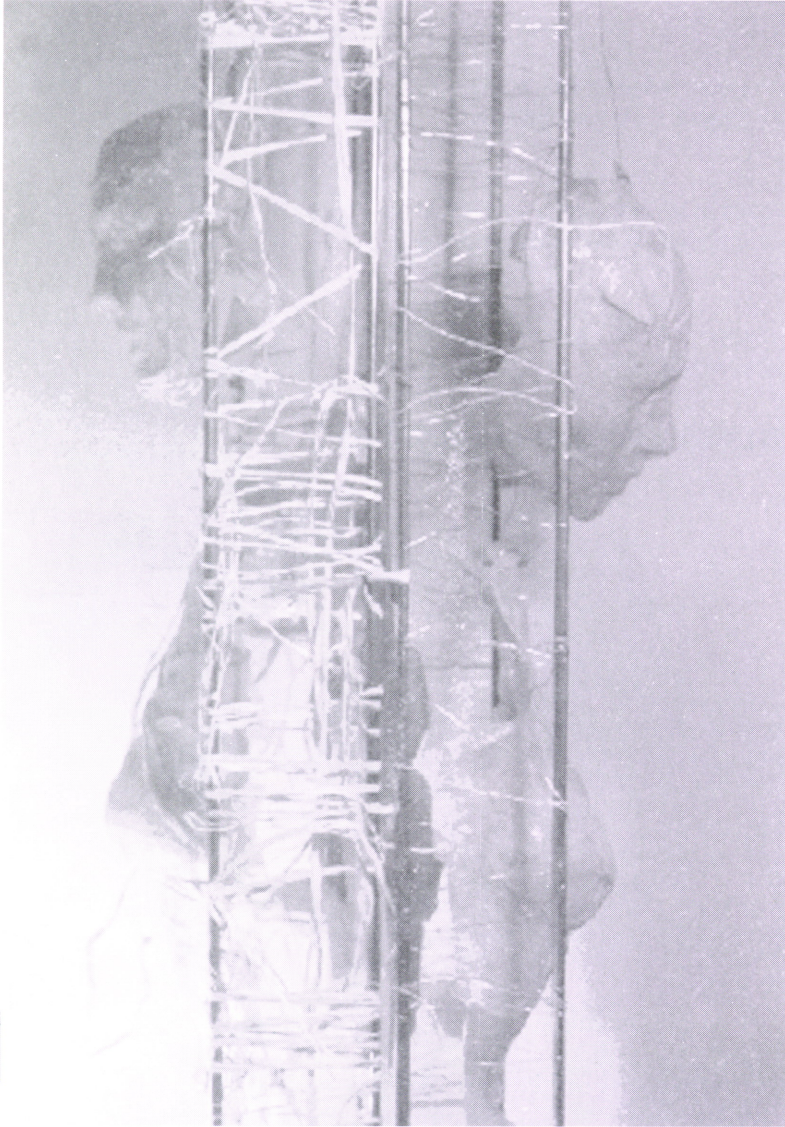
Their cabin completed and their hopes for a child disintegrated, the Crocilla's turned their attention to what would become Crocilla's Storybook Farm Petting Zoo in 1990.

While they were trying to get USDA approval for the zoo, however, Joe suffered his third massive heart attack in two years in February 1990. Still in the hospital, Joe, who was raised Catholic, told Linda he wanted to go back to church.

Linda had a Baptist background, but had left the church when she was young because of a bad experience. "I just cringed at the thought of going back to church," she says.

But Joe was persistent, and even called for a priest to come to his hospital bed, Linda says. The priest came in and asked Joe how long it had been since his last communion. "About 30 years," Joe replied. "The priest," Linda says, "turned around and walked back out the door."

Meanwhile, Joe's daughter had called Cops for Christ in New York City and located the organization's founder, Mac Ballard, living just minutes away from where Joe was staying in the hospital. Joe's daughter spoke to him and asked if he would visit her father, Linda says.



Patrick Hanson
"#3 series"

Ballard agreed and came down the hospital corridor about the time the priest left Joe's room. One of the nurses in the hallway stopped Ballard on his way and warned him, "I wouldn't go in there if I were you, he just threw out a priest," Linda says. Ballard went in nonetheless, and Linda and Joe embarked on what they consider the most important journey of their lives -- their spiritual journey as Christians.

Three years later, a week before Easter in 1993, the Crocillas erected their monument to Christ -- the towering cross that stands in the front yard. The letters, "INRI," which Linda says mean "king of the Jews," are nailed to the top of the cross, and a purple cloth of royalty is draped from one side to the other. "I just decided," Linda says, "that we needed to make a public statement about our faith."

They opened their petting zoo in June 1990 with animal that were mostly donated, Linda says. "We had 150 birds, mammals and reptiles," Linda says. "Literally, there were more animals to pet and handle than Zoo Atlanta."

"One of the most amazing animals and my favorite, besides the eight deer we had, was a miniature horse named Magic," she says. "He was 24 feet 1/2 inch at the shoulders. He missed the 'Guinness Book of Records' by 3/4 inch."

Joe and Linda found a way to incorporate their faith into their work at the petting zoo. "I developed what I called a 'Biblical Tour,'" Linda says. "I especially made a point of teaching the creation aspect of our planet rather than the evolution theory as to how and why each animal is the way it is."



Gretchen Grissom
"Untitled"

After nearly five years of running the zoo at a loss, however, the Crocillas were forced to close it down. "Our feed bill was in excess of \$700 per month," Linda said, "we generated an average of about \$300 in revenue ... it got to be too expensive to maintain. Finally, we had to find homes for most of the animals. It was a great ministry and I miss it so much."

Some of the animals Linda and Joe kept included their emus. It was during a time when raising and selling emus was popular, but the were difficult to market nonetheless. They felt they needed a gimmick to set them apart from other emu dealers in the area. That's when Linda came up with the idea of painting and decorating the eggshells. It was an idea that would culminate into a passion. And a passion that would help Linda work through some of the darkest hours she would ever see.

In 1995, the Crocillas learned that Alabama had lifted the age limit that was used to deny their request for adoption eight years earlier. With the passage of a law primarily to allow grandparents the opportunity to adopt their grandchildren, Joe and Linda renewed their hopes of becoming adoptive parents.

"We started the process again," Linda said. "We filled out reams of forms, got check-ups, AIDS tested, fingerprinted, photographed and filled out more forms."

The Crocillas knew they would not be able to bring an infant into their home. Linda had been diagnosed with lupus and fibromyalgia, and Joe's heart was only at 40 percent after three heart attacks. The child they hoped to adopt would be a little girl between the ages of 6 and 12. Most children this age are considered "unadoptable," Linda said, and 90 percent of them have been sexually abused.

"We bought dozens of books on dealing with behavior problems, abused children, adoptive problems, etc.," Linda said. "We joined the Rocky Mountain Adoption Exchange to start searching for our child. Selecting a child and asking her to join your family is serious business, and we wanted to understand what we were getting into."

"We had to create a 'family album' with photos of our home, the child's room and information to give the child so she would have some idea what to expect," Linda said. "We bought a bedroom suit with twin beds in case we got sisters."

Linda had taught children with learning disabilities in the past, and she and Joe knew that socialization would be important for the child. They wanted to spend time in the evening with her doing activities she would enjoy. Linda spent hours at thrift stores and Goodwill searching for books, toys and games to play with her.



In Alabama, Linda said, the Department of Human Resources (DHR) won't visit your home to approve or disapprove you as an adoption candidate until you have a room ready for the child to move into. This meant that Joe and Linda had to add on to their three-room cabin to make a place for a child. They knocked out their front porch, moved the kitchen and added another bedroom in March 1997 to prepare for the new addition to their family.

On April 15, a social worker from the DHR arrived to inspect their home. Everything was in order, Linda said, of the social worker's visit. The only request she had was that a fence be erected between the house and the emus so the child wouldn't get hurt if she went outside unsupervised. "And of course, we did it immediately," Linda said.

In fact, the Crocillas erected the fence so quickly that the social worker never got the chance to reinspect their home before Linda's mother, Doris Belcher Robinson, was murdered 12 days later.

Linda was taking a nap when Joe came in and woke her up. He had seen an ambulance heading toward her parent's house a quarter mile down the road. Linda called the house thinking that maybe something had happened to her father, John Robinson, who was severely afflicted with Alzheimer's disease. When she got no answer, she drove to her parent's home.

"When I saw the yellow tape across the yard, I knew it wasn't a heart attack," Linda said. "As I rushed toward the tape, a deputy stopped me and asked who I was. I told him my parents lived there and then asked what happened. He said my mother had been shot. I asked who did it. He said my father had done it. I looked at him and exclaimed that Dad was an Alzheimer's patient. Then I completely lost control and started screaming. The next few days were primarily a haze for me."

John was taken to the "In-Justice Center," and after two hours of police interrogation without an attorney, he signed a confession. But he didn't know, Linda said, what he was confessing to.

Several months before the murder, Doris hired a live-in nurse to help her care for her husband of 49 years. The police never considered him a suspect, Linda said, even though Doris' sister, Florence, felt she had evidence to prove that he had a motive. Florence gave police a sworn affidavit stating that Doris told her two days prior to her murder that she and John's nurse had gotten into a big argument. The argument, Linda said, was over money her mother had loaned him. Doris gave him a deadline to move out. On Saturday, April 27, Linda said, her father's nurse left and Doris Robinson lay dead from a gunshot wound to the stomach.

The police never took fingerprints from the murder weapon, or dusted either man's hands for gunpowder, Linda said. They simply sent John Robinson to a state institution for the criminally insane. One year later, John was released in his daughter's custody and now occupies the room the Crocillas built for the little girl they will never have.

Now, Linda said, she decorates her eggs, and "I fight my father's fight." She goes into the office that used to be her kitchen and pull open a file drawer filled with documents. "This is my father's file," she says of the man who no longer recognizes his only child.

"He's well advanced into stage 2, close to stage 3," Linda said of her father's disease. "For a year and a half he called me by my mother's name," she said. "If you ask him who we are, he'll tell you he was just sitting on the curb and this nice family took him in." A few days ago he didn't know how to get ready for bed, Linda said. He came to her and asked, "Can you show me what I need to know about this bedroom?"

Linda goes into her workshop, the one-room portable building where her oldest dog, Curry, is sleeping near the door.

Inside, the room is orderly. A display case is adorned with Linda's artwork -- decorated chicken, goose, emu and ostrich eggs -- on the countertop in the corner. Shelves are weighted with books grouped into categories. Large plastic containers with hordes of neatly labeled drawers filled with tiny replicas of life's possessions line the walls. Pliers, picks, pincers and dental tools stand upright in their caddy. A loft stacked to the A-frame ceiling with boxes hangs overhead. And a S2 business license dangles on the wall.

Trina Jones
"Muse"

Golden Dean
"Untitled"



Leslie Underwood
"Protection"



This, said Linda, is her therapy, her refuge, from a chaotic world that stopped making sense long ago.

Joe climbs on a large wooden spool that has been made into a table and retrieves a crate from the loft for his wife. Inside the crate are several dozen diaper-wrapped eggs that Linda has painted and decorated.

Each egg takes between two and 30 hours to complete, Linda said, depending on the size and complexity of design. "I try to make it look so realistic you could just step into it." And indeed they do, these perfect recreations of an imperfect world.

Outside under the clear Alabama sky Linda wraps her arms around herself.

A strong woman, a survivor, her voice cracks as she speaks of the generosity of strangers. Standing nearly where she stood when she watched her house burn down 12 years ago, Linda recalls the three carloads of "acquaintances" who came the next day with clothes, food, household goods and appliances. Whether from the cold of the memory, she shivers.

"I know what supreme grief is," she said. "When I see people grieving and heartbroken, I understand and sometimes I can help them.

"I would not have wanted any of this to happen, but I don't see how I could have moved from where I was to where I am without it. The bottom line is, God is with me every breath I take."

SUNSET . WISDOM

A boy asked the sunset --

"Where are you going?"

And the old, wise sun replied --

"I must go away,

for today is no more a day;

But there will be a day, so soon, so bright,

in which I will show myself to you again before a night."

Pierce Walton

Now the boy was young and infinitely removed
from the sun of his preceeding, the sun due his subdued;
And there he shone in silence as the sun shed him a tear
and knew that he would reappear to find the boy sincere.

Yet the boy contested --

"Leave me now, I'll leave myself,

for it's you I need, you see?

I need you more than life itself,

and life is only free."

And so the old, wise sun advised --

"My kin, the moon, is true and blue;

converse with her and her with you.

She shines so bright at night, her night;

I'm sure she'll make friends with you."

The boy was confused and yet again removed
from the sun of his preceeding, the sun due his subdued;
But here now shone in silence was a friend of his of new,
and he knew that he should be at peace, for the sun would return soon.



Charles Peerson
"Untitled"



Leslie Underwood
"Healing"

Liza Cobb
"Birth and Rebirth"



ANONYMOUS

Damn this mirage they call "Oasis"
Frustration
Borborygmic
Rage
Desire

-To schedule my future

Inability runs feverish with the stroke of a key

Again I pound my fist in agony and despair.

Again.

Again.

Again.

Time...

A solitary figure facing the inadequate services
of a higher power.

The "Man" just keepin' us down
Freaking piece of crap.

At last! Joy is found. Difficulties abound yet
overcome through sheer will and determina-
tion of my spirit. No help from the refuge
from the desert heat. No water here -- only
frustration...

Four little girls, together all the time.
They go to school together, walk the halls
together. They have sleepovers and goofy
fashion shows together.
They grow up together.

Anonymous

As children they are fast friends; nothing will ever
tear them apart. They know each other's secrets, and
protect each other from those on the outside.

Then they are a little older. They're in high school. They still
talk, but now they've discovered boys and popularity.

Gina is the first to go. She's not from America, but she's
lived here almost all of her life. Her difference from the rest of the kids

makes her
interesting
to others
outside the

FOUR LITTLE GIRLS

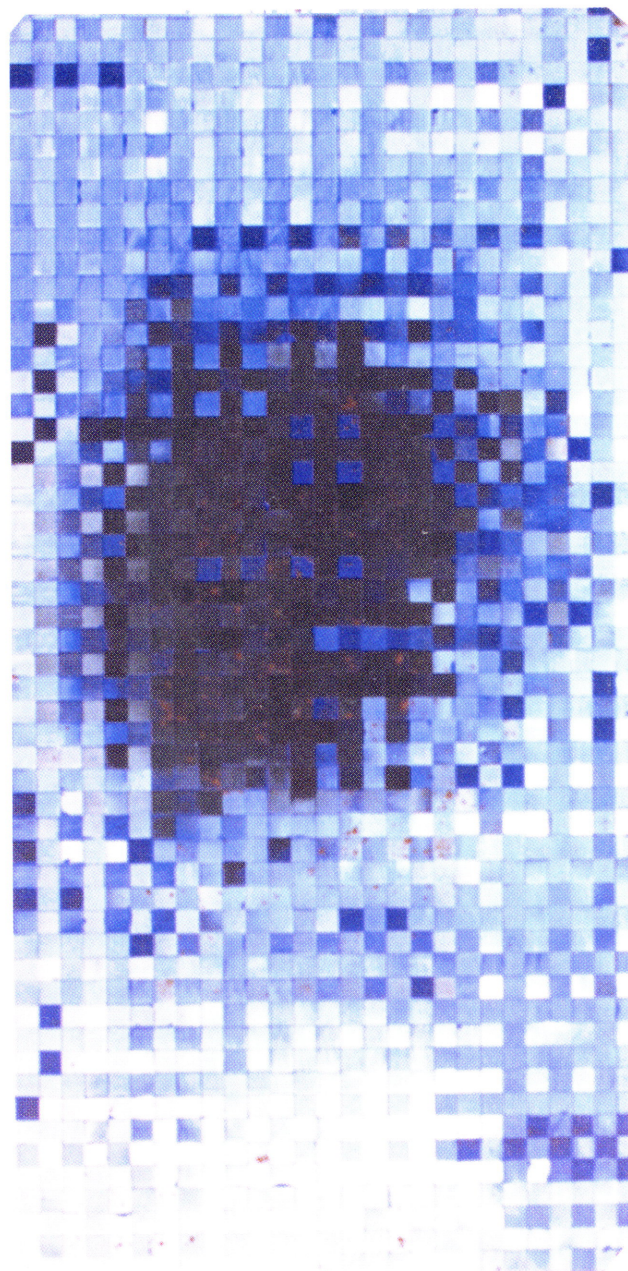
little group of four. Other girls want to be her friend, girls from the "in"
crowd. How segmented high school can be. Gina begins distancing her-
self from the group, in the way that only a 14-year-old can. She runs
for student council, wants to be a cheerleader or a majorette. But
that same difference that made her interesting also makes her
unable to break into these little power centers. When she real-
izes who her friends were, it's too late.

The little group carries on, now down to three.
The girls try to pretend that nothing else will happen,
that they'll be friends forever. But these are innocent
girls, and they don't realize that they must change
in order to grow up. No longer do they share
secrets and have goofy little sleepovers. Now
they begin splitting up. They have their
own lives, their own interests. Lisa does-
n't want to be around others much
anymore; they tease her because
children are cruel. Anna stays
close to Lisa, but finds her own lit-
tle group to fit into.

And I, I begin to find friend
after friend who is totally wrong. The
one with the bizarre family life, the
one who is obsessed with sex, the one
more impressed by herself than anyone
else. None stay my friend for long. I
make one friend who stays through high
school. We are friends until I leave home
two years after graduation, and she leaves
to do her thing, too. The next time I hear
from her she is on the verge of marriage and
not interested in speaking to her old high
school buddy.

I lose track of Gina, Lisa and Anna.
Lisa still sends me a card every Christmas; I once
spoke to Gina on the phone when she called for
no real reason. Anna seems to have dropped off
the face of the earth.

The years pass quickly by. My Christmas card
from Lisa has long since stopped, and I no longer
think about them much. I've made friends that will
always be my friends: my daughter and my husband.



Jay Sanders
"Untitled"

One day I get the mail and see an invitation. I open it to see that it's been ten years since I graduated high school. I hated high school, anyway, so I just start to toss the invitation into the trash. Then I remember Gina, Lisa and Anna for the first time in years. I wonder what they are like? My husband tells me I should go, so I book a flight to the town where I grew up, and wonder what they are like now.

On the day of the reunion, I show up at the run-down old gym that the school uses for everything from basketball games to the prom. "Welcome class of 1994" is posted over the doors. I go in to find someone I don't remember handing out name tags and pointing everyone in the direction of the reunion.

I look around; some faces I recognize, most I don't. Some look as though they have been successful. I speak to some that I know, and marvel at how changed they are.

I again wonder about Gina, Lisa and Anna. I wonder if they are here.

Then I see Gina. It doesn't surprise me that she's here, because she would never have missed such an occasion.

She looks, oddly enough, the same as she did in high school. Excitement in her voice, boredom in her eyes. She's married now to the new pastor of her father's old church. It's really perfect for her; now she can become as vapid as her mother was. I feel sad, and we take our leave of each other.

I soon see Anna. Anna is a music professor at a school in New York. Though we were never the closest members of our group, we are happy to see each other, and happy for each other. I discover that she lives near me, and we make sincere promises to meet again when we get home.

I meet more people, am shocked again and again, sometimes happily, sometimes not. I wonder where Lisa is. I wander out to the registration table to see if she was supposed to come.

I ask the woman behind the table if Lisa is coming. She looks at her list, and makes a sound of surprise.

"Lisa Dalton? You haven't heard? She died five years ago."

I feel shock take over my brain.

Lisa? Dead? How?

"I don't know," says the sympathetic volunteer. "That's all it says on my list."

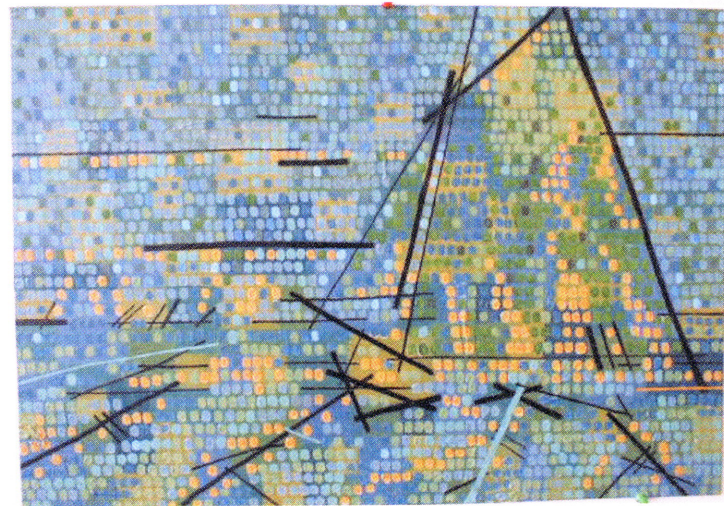
I return to the reunion and seek Anna out. I ask her if she knew about Lisa. She didn't, and together we sit in our grief.

Gina returns to see us sitting together. She squeals something about old times, not noticing our upset. Then she sobers, saying that she forgot about Lisa. We ask her what happened, and she tells us that it was the leukemia Lisa had had even in school.

In that minute, it is as if nothing changed. The surviving three of the four little girls sit together, lost in memories of their fallen comrade.

Then Gina flits off to another group, Anna rejoins her husband, and I walk out the door. I don't look back, because this night has taught me something that I will never forget.

Don't mess with your memories.



Elizabeth Coe
"On the Water with David Alan Coe"



Trey Hoseny
"Untitled"

A . R I P . O N . P U B L I C . E D U C A T I O N

PIERCE WATSON

Think hard and think alone --
That is what academia is prone
To talking themselves
Into believing that they know
That that is best for us to know

Touch the worst and feel the best
We can take on all the rest
Of the world
Rule it all and all to rule
Democracy is ever a tool

Quantity in entity
Never develops autonomy
When learning is
The issue that affects us all
For quantity is the tallest wall

Stephen Caine
"Neferu - Neferaten"



Elizabeth C. Dixon
"Untitled"



Patrick Gilland
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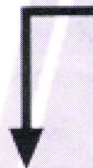


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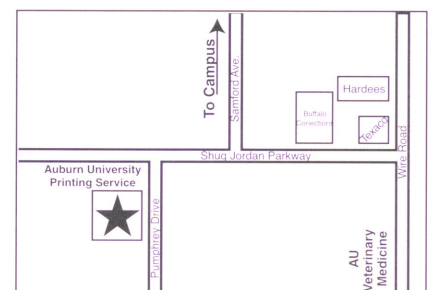
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